SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Delivered at the Opening

of

THE FIRST SESSION

of

THE FIFTY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

of the

PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA

ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1985

by

HIS HONOUR

THE HONOURABLE ALAN R. ABRAHAM, C.D, D.Eng.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR: Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

1. I welcome you in our Sovereign's name to this Opening of the First Session of the Fifty-Fourth General Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia.

2. Since our last Assembly, our Province was honoured by the visit in September of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. Nova Scotians welcomed His Holiness and his message of peace and brotherhood.

3. Last summer, Nova Scotians and thousands of visitors from other provinces and countries were thrilled by the Parade of Sail activities in Halifax and Sydney. The visit of the Tall Ships, led by our own Bluenose II, was an event that will long be remembered by participants and spectators alike and was of benefit to our tourism program.

4. My Government was saddened by the death in 1984, of the Honourable Frederick Blois, a former Senator and a Member of this House, who served his Province and Country with great distinction for many years.

5. The Royal Canadian Navy celebrates the 75th Anniversary of its establishment this year. Nova Scotia enjoys a unique and close association with the Royal Canadian Navy and we are especially proud of its history and traditions and value deeply the contribution the naval service makes to our Province.

6. The Royal Canadian Legion celebrates its Diamond Jubilee in 1985. My Government supports the activities of the Royal Canadian Legion which have been in the forefront of community service with particular interest in young people and our senior citizens.

7. My Government congratulates the Canadian Girl Guides Association on the celebration of the 75th Anniversary of its founding in Canada. We recognize the importance of the Girl Guide movement in Nova Scotia and appreciate the enormous effort made by thousands of volunteer leaders who have caused this movement to flourish.

8. My Government looks forward to its participation in April at the First Ministers' Conference on Aboriginal Affairs.

9. This summer we will welcome an assembly and review of naval ships from around the world which will gather in Bedford Basin to salute 75 years of naval service in Canada.

10. The Nova Scotia Tattoo, recognized as one of the most colourful military and historical pageants in the world, will give special recognition this year to the role of the Royal Canadian Navy in our history.

11. My Government is pleased to join with all Nova Scotians this year in marking the 200th Anniversary of the founding of the City of Sydney and the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the Town of North Sydney.

12. 1985 is the final year of the United Nations International Decade for Women which had the continuing theme of equality, development and peace. My Government has realized a number of initiatives designed to ensure the full and equal participation of women in our society.

13. My Government will undertake a review of ways to enhance the participation of women in the economy with particular focus on labour market issues. My Government, through the adoption of "Women in Nova Scotia – a Provincial Plan of Action", reinforces its continuing commitment to the creation of an environment which fosters equality.

14. In recognition of International Youth Year in 1985, my Government will participate with the Federal Government and the private sector in activities designed for youth to make the transition from education to employment.

15. A series of career fairs will be held in all areas of the Province which will provide youth and their parents with first hand information on education, training and employment opportunities available in Nova Scotia.

16. To ensure Nova Scotia's educational competitiveness, a major expansion of the facilities and program offerings at the Nova Scotia Institute of Technology is to be undertaken immediately to provide training on the most technologically advanced equipment which will lead to improved employment opportunities.

17. My Government will act to integrate training programs with the requirements of the job market, by providing on-the-job training opportunities, ensuring that course material is linked to job requirements and by upgrading institutional staff skills and training equipment.

18. To ensure that Nova Scotians are fully able to participate in a new technical and technological information age, a computer hardware and software resource centre is being developed by the Department of Education to assist teachers and students in developing appropriate and relevant computer-related skills.

19. My Government shares the belief of all Nova Scotians that governments at all levels, the private sector, and labour, must work together. My Government applauds and supports the commitment of the new Government of Canada to pursue the fundamental and essential goals of national reconciliation and economic renewal. My Government is committed to the principles of co-operation and consultation. The effectiveness of dedication to these principles was clearly demonstrated by the Government of Canada and the Provinces at the recent First Ministers' Conference, where a consensus was reached on four vital issues:

- The attraction and encouragement of new investment to create jobs;
- Upgrading the skills of our people;
- Fostering regional economic development opportunities based on the strengths of our region; and
- the improvement of the competitiveness and marketing of our goods and services.

20. My Government is encouraged by the positive response given to the White Paper on Economic Development, "Building Competitiveness". Several initiatives will build upon the framework for action laid out in the White Paper to guide future economic growth and development in the Province.

21. My Government's top priority is jobs – maintaining existing jobs, and fostering the economic climate which results in the creation of new job opportunities.

22. My Government recognizes Nova Scotia as Canada's gateway to the world. The opening of the World Trade and Convention Centre provides a showplace for Nova Scotia goods and services to the world market place. My Government will provide the dynamic leadership needed in the pursuit of expanding export trade and will encourage Nova Scotia industry to provide quality products and services which are competitive and respond to world market demands.

23. Nova Scotia continues to outpace Canada in economic growth. The level of output in Nova Scotia was 12.5% higher in 1984 compared to two years earlier. Nova Scotia's gain was higher than the nationwide growth of 7.5%. Nova Scotia experienced an 8% growth in employment compared to a 3.3% growth for Canada in the same period.

24. My Government will build on our foundation of economic success. During the coming years, Nova Scotia will meet the challenge and opportunity afforded by the new technology of the world market place.

25. My Government, therefore, will focus on the increased development of business opportunities in our natural resource sector, primary and secondary manufacturing, technologically sophisticated industry and in the service industry.

26. We are competing in an era of rapid change and must keep pace with the price and quality pressures these changes are forcing on all industrialized parts of the world.

27. My Government will encourage Nova Scotian industry to provide products of high quality which are competitive in the world market place and which respond to the needs of those markets.

28. A new technology transfer subsidiary agreement is being negotiated with the Federal Government to assist enterprises in Nova Scotia to incorporate advanced technology in their operation and to create an increased level of high technology output.

29. As Canada's gateway to the world, Nova Scotia must trade with the world. Expanded trade means jobs for Nova Scotians and the objective of my Government is to double Nova Scotia exports in the remainder of this decade. To this end, you will be asked to consider legislation creating a Trade Development Authority to assume overall responsibility for provincial trade support initiatives.

30. My Government is committed to directing the resources of every government department and agency to create the climate in which the private sector can expand to provide secure, permanent jobs and expanded opportunities.

31. My Government is committed to increase the level of Nova Scotian goods and services purchased by public funds. The initiative includes an information campaign, phase one of which has resulted in the release of the publication "Selling to Nova Scotia's Public Sector Market, a Purchasing Guide". The objective of this initiative is to create more opportunities for Nova Scotia business and increase jobs for Nova Scotians.

32. My Government recognizes the vital role played by entrepreneurs and product innovators in generating new and growing businesses. A major challenge is to have in place programs and services which will meet the special needs and potential of such individuals.

33. A special committee of private sector business people has been established by my Government as a means of improving government assistance programs to business, achieving program delivery efficiencies, and simplifying application procedures.

34. My Government will be examining new initiatives in the area of equity capital in order to encourage higher economic growth and an improved equity capital structure in the Province. It is recognized that the ability to raise equity capital has a direct impact on the success of entrepreneurs and companies to create economic activity.

35. My Government recognizes the important role played by employment co-operatives in the Province. In support of these job-creating self-help initiatives, the Venture Capital Program will be adjusted to allow Nova Scotia employment cooperatives to benefit from venture capital investments in the Province.

36. My Government has recently announced summer employment programs geared to providing training opportunities and work experience. Continuing emphasis will be placed on entrepreneurial skills development, and co-ordination with Federal youth training and employment initiatives.

37. Recognizing the important role women play in the entrepreneurial development of Nova Scotia, my Government will be proposing strategies and programs to encourage Nova Scotia women to start their own businesses.

38. My Government will also begin a program of co-operative education with the business community of Nova Scotia to expand advancement opportunities for women who are particularly vulnerable to technological displacement.

39. Major economic development programs and projects are being jointly funded by my Government and the Government of Canada under the terms of a new ten year Economic and Regional Development Agreement. Six subsidiary agreements, with a total financial commitment exceeding $140 million, have already been signed.

40. The small business community is the major source of new job opportunities in our provincial economy and is the prime target of the subsidiary agreements which have been signed and those which are under active negotiation.

41. The traditional primary resources sector of our economy continues to be a major source of our economic growth. Agreements have been signed with the Government of Canada allocating $108 million to promote economic growth and provide job opportunities in the mineral, forestry, fisheries and tourism sectors.

42. A series of major steps is about to commence in 1985 by industry and my Government to move the first offshore project into the development stage. My Government, in concert with the Government of Canada, is committed to the development of our offshore hydrocarbon resources thereby providing many new job and business opportunities for Nova Scotians.

43. The mining and mineral sector has been a major contributor to the Province's economy for many years and will continue to be in the future.

44. North America's first tin mine will begin production in East Kemptville later this year. This enterprise will make a major contribution to the economic and employment growth of southwestern Nova Scotia.

45. Major new industrial mineral developments took place last year and, with the signing of the Canada-Nova Scotia Development Agreement, new initiatives will be provided by government to the private sector in 1985 to maintain this growth and the creation of new job opportunities in this resource sector.

46. Our forestry resources have played a major role in the development of our Province and will continue to do so in the years ahead. Governments must work together with landowners and industry in improving the productivity of the resource, the quantity and quality of the forest products harvested, and the preservation and expansion of job opportunities.

47. My Government has been successful in concluding a $17.5 million Forest Renewal Agreement with the Federal Government. This Agreement will result in a substantial increase of employment in this sector, as well as enhancement of our forest stands.

48. A Forestry Worker Training Program is being developed to ensure that the skilled workforce is available to undertake the required silviculture programs.

49. During 1984, my Government received the report of the Royal Commission on Forestry. This comprehensive report is presently being reviewed by the forest community and my Government.

50. Our forest renewal efforts will continue to expand in 1985, stimulated by the programs under the Canada/Nova Scotia Forest Resource Development Agreement and the Canada/Nova Scotia Forest Renewal Agreement. Plans are now in place for the planting of 20 million forest tree seedlings by industry, private landowners and government during 1985.

51. My Government continues to work closely with farmers and farm organizations to increase the production of feed grains and bring about increased efficiency in the livestock feeding industry.

52. My Government will continue to support the province's capacity for agricultural production through the support of land development programs and technology development leading to more efficient systems of crop and livestock production. In 1985, my Government will continue its support of the farm land purchase leasing policy offered by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Marketing.

53. The first class of students graduating with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture will graduate this year from the Nova Scotia Agricultural College. My Government will continue to support the expansion of this important facility for agricultural training and education.

54. My Government is also pleased that the new facilities for the Atlantic Winter Fair were opened during 1984, providing a permanent home for this significant annual agricultural event.

55. Protection of jobs in the fishing industry through the creation of a better investment climate is my Government's goal. This will be accomplished by encouraging the private sector to upgrade and modernize equipment and facilities.

56. The implementation of several initiatives under the Fisheries subsidiary agreement with the Federal Government will encourage and support quality enhancement, productivity improvement, market development and resource expansion in the fisheries. Such programs will benefit all sectors of the industry, including the smaller and inshore operations which are the economic base of many of our coastal communities.

57. My Government will continue to press strongly for a strengthened program of ship construction and repair for Canadian purposes in Canadian shipyards. My Government is actively negotiating with potential new operators for the Halifax Shipyards.

58. A new Sydney Steel Corporation subsidiary agreement is under negotiation with the Federal Government to provide the funds necessary to enable Sysco to proceed with the next step in its modernization program.

59. North America's first Tidal Power Generating Station at Annapolis Royal became operational in 1984. This tidal power project is an important element in our ongoing program to harness the energy potential of our tides. New studies are underway to determine the full feasibility and best methods of developing a large tidal power generating project in the Bay of Fundy.

60. The Nova Scotia Power Corporation in 1984 concluded a five year coal pricing agreement with the Cape Breton Development Corporation. This agreement ensures the maintenance of mining employment by providing a market for the major portion of the coal production in Cape Breton.

61. Coal continues to be a key component of the province's energy mix, and with the completion of Lingan No. 4 Generating Plant in 1984, our dependence on oil for electrical generation is less than 15 percent.

62. My Government will be initiating and funding a new program of free energy audits and follow-up advice for municipal and provincial buildings and small business. The resulting lowering of energy costs will mean savings for taxpayers and businesses of Nova Scotia.

63. My Government initiated an energy plan in 1979 to improve the efficiency of energy use in the province and to reduce our dependence on insecure imported oil. Since that time significant accomplishments have been achieved.

64. Nevertheless, there is considerable room for energy efficiency improvements and oil substitution initiatives. Nova Scotia continues to be a leader in promoting conservation measures and developing its indigenous energy resources such as offshore oil and gas, tidal power, coal and forest residues.

65. An energy plan will be presented in 1985 updating Nova Scotia's energy supply and demand outlook and strategic options in light of the energy challenges and opportunities now facing us.

66. My Government is pleased with the establishment of the Provincial-Municipal Fact-Finding Committee. Comprised of members of the Executive Council and executive officers of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, the Committee's mandate is to review matters of mutual interest with respect to finance and delivery of services to Nova Scotians.

67. My Government expects to receive the report of the Task Force on Investment and Taxation in 1985. The Task Force will examine provincial and municipal tax measures as they affect the business environment and make recommendations to stimulate productive investment.

68. My Government recognizes the importance of the transportation industry to the economy of Nova Scotia. Accordingly, my Government will introduce amendments to the Motor Carrier Act reflecting many of the recommendations of the Motor Carrier Act Review Committee and the Council of Maritime Premiers. These changes will result in a reduction of regulations and transportation costs.

69. Planning will be undertaken with the municipalities for the implementation of improvements to the Halifax-Dartmouth transportation systems, including additional ferry service and a new computerized traffic signal control system.

70. The development of outdoor recreational facilities throughout our provincial parks program will continue during 1985. Development work will continue on several major near-urban parks and our first development specifically dedicated for the use of handicapped persons will be placed in service.

71. My Government has embarked on a program to fully computerize the Student Aid Office of the Department of Education to ensure the prompt processing and completion of student aid applications in minimum time.

72. My Government will establish a new province-wide toll-free telephone system to provide equal access for all Nova Scotians to government offices.

73. Legislation will be introduced dealing with occupational health and safety.

74. My Government has begun a consultative process with respect to Parts I and II of the Trade Union Act and looks forward to the receipt of the reports and recommendations from this process.

75. Having received and reviewed all responses to the White Paper on the Police Act, my Government will introduce amendments to the Police Act.

76. During 1984, my Government increased its efforts substantially to encourage Nova Scotians to drive more safely. A Task Force was established to co-ordinate programs of awareness, education and enforcement.

77. In our schools, a program to foster safer graduation celebrations was pioneered during 1984. Students from sixty graduating classes from vocational, junior high and senior high and private schools participated. That program will be offered again this year.

78. In August of this year, a large contingent of young Nova Scotian athletes, coaches, managers and support staff will participate in the Canada Summer Games. This event will mark the culmination of two years of work and planning in preparation for these Games. My Government extends its best wishes to our young Nova Scotian athletes in the Canada Summer Games and congratulates the volunteers for their successful efforts.

79. My Government is pleased that an agreement has been reached on the financing of the Canada Winter Games for 1987. This national event will provide permanent first class athletic and recreational facilities in Cape Breton.

80. My Government recognizes the continued strength of the housing sector and appreciates the important contribution of the residential development industry to the provincial economy. Nova Scotia's share of housing construction in the Atlantic Region and in Canada as a whole has steadily increased over the past five years. My Government will continue its commitment to housing, and will work with the private sector to meet provincial housing needs.

81. My Government will continue to support and encourage home ownership and the residential construction industry through the Residential Lands Development Program.

82. My Government recognizes the need of lower income families and senior citizens to have adequate, affordable housing. Rent-to-income housing will continue to be developed to meet this need.

83. My Government is pleased that the senior citizens housing about to be built in Dartmouth will also provide space for a major senior citizens service centre.

84. My Government understands the importance of assisting senior citizens to live independently. Therefore, the Senior Citizens Assistance Programme, which allows seniors who are homeowners to undertake needed home repairs, will continue to be available.

85. My Government supports the important goal of Nova Scotian families to own their own home. However, rising housing costs are making home ownership more difficult for many families. My Government will continue to provide the self-help and other home ownership support programs which assist families to achieve home ownership.

86. My Government is committed to the proposition that the best assurance of strong human services and social progress is a prosperous and growing economy.

87. My Government continues its ongoing commitment to the provision of highest quality health care for Nova Scotians.

88. Construction is now underway for the new Veterans' Pavillion at Camp Hill Hospital.

89. The report of the Select Committee on Health of the Third Session of the Fifty-Third General Assembly will be considered.

90. In keeping with its commitment that there would be no extra-billing for medical services, my Government negotiated adjustments to the fee schedule for medical services with the Medical Society of Nova Scotia.

91. Since the announcement of the Home Life Supports Program in April, 1984, my Government has increased its funding support of municipalities and agencies to enable them to assist needy senior citizens and disabled persons to remain in their own homes and communities.

92. Homemaker Services have more than doubled; a new program of in-home supports is being implemented in 31 municipalities and 12 innovative demonstration projects are being implemented.

93. The first provincial place of care and safety for children is being established in Truro. The Nova Scotia School for Boys at Shelburne is to be converted to meet requirements of the Young Offenders' Act; two new ten-bed centres will be developed in 1985 and a program of alternative measures, community service and fine options will be implemented.

94. My Government has provided a secure financial base which has permitted the establishment of three new transition houses for battered women and children.

95. My Government is intensifying its efforts to counter incidents of child abuse and neglect.

96. My Government has made major improvements to Nova Scotia's day care program as a result of the recommendations of the Minister's Task Force on Day Care Services, including an increase in the daily subsidy rate and an increase in the equipment grant.

97. My Government is co-operating with the Federal Government to achieve a new Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons Agreement.

98. The first Nova Scotia Conference on Aging and the Aged, organized by the Senior Citizens Secretariat was held in June, 1984. Regional meetings of seniors will be held in 1985 throughout the Province to follow up on recommendations of the Conference.

99. My Government anticipates finalizing an agreement with the Micmac people and the Federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for the establishment of a Micmac Family and Children's Services Agency.

100. You will be asked to establish a Select Committee to review the Rules and Procedures of this House.

101. You will be asked to consider amendments to various public Acts.

102. My Government has directed that a general revision of the laws of Nova Scotia be carried out to produce a new Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia.

103. The Public Accounts for the year ended March 31, 1985, will be presented for your consideration as will Estimates for the fiscal year to begin April 1, 1985.

104. To these and all other matters which may come before you, I ask your most careful attention, praying that sound judgment and Divine Providence may guide you in all your deliberations and decisions.

105. God Save The Queen;

God Bless Nova Scotia;

God Bless Canada.